



St Mary's Community Pre-School Casino Inc.
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9th April 2020

Dear Families,

With the end of term 1 coming to a close on Thursday 9th April we want to say thank you for your support and understanding as we continue to move through the unsettling and anxious days, weeks and months ahead. We want you to know that we miss having all children/families and staff together. Our preschool community feels so very different to the way it was before the COVID-19 pandemic.

We appreciate those that have been able to stay at home, keeping children, families and staff safe. It has not been easy to adjust to staying at home, practising social distancing in accordance with government and public health requirements and instructions, but we know this will continue for some time to come.

We also know that families need to work, especially essential workers that may not have alternative care arrangements. While it is difficult to forecast what will happen during the school holiday period, we know we must work to put procedures in place that protect the health and safety of all stakeholders within our preschool community and beyond.

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) has issued an early childhood education and care (ECEC) specific coronavirus (COVID-19) statement, which makes a series of recommendations about how services can reduce the risk of community transmission of the virus. While reports on COVID-19 in children show that they are less likely than adults to be infected and have severe illness, they are still vulnerable to COVID -19, and as such, measures should be taken to ensure their safety.

AHPPC considers ECEC are essential services and should continue at this time. However, recommendations by the AHPPC advise risk mitigation measures should be in place for Early Childhood and Learning Centers as follows

- Exclusion of unwell staff, children and visitors
- Reduced mixing of children by separating cohorts (including the staggering of meal and play times).
- Enhanced hygiene for children staff and parents
- Regular cleaning of high touch surfaces
- Washing of play items
- Influenza vaccinations for children, staff and parents.

- The Australian Health Protection Principal committee (AHPPC) recommends that alternative care arrangements should be considered for children who are “highly vulnerable to adverse outcomes should they be infected with COVID-19”, saying that parents should seek medical advice for these children.

The role that children play in transmission and amplification of COVID-19 remains largely unknown and AHPPC will continue to closely monitor the evidence as it emerges to inform public health policy.

With consideration to all AHPPC recommendations, public health and government guidelines St Mary’s Community Preschool is responding in-line with our duty of care to children families and staff. St Mary’s Community Preschool will work to put in place a viable operating model, one that is following public health and government requirements and recommendations during the pandemic. We are doing this because we care very much about you, your family/children and about the health and safety of all staff as we move through this pandemic.

We realise many of you will be continuing self-isolation into term 2 and we ask that you stay in touch with preschool. Please email preschool marytots@bigpond.com or message our Facebook Page to let us know if you are continuing self-isolation (please note fees will not be charged for families self-isolating). If you have questions or queries please use these communication systems during the school holidays.

Preschool is working on ways to stay connected with you and to support the play and learning needs of your child, if your child does not physically attend preschool next term.

The NSW Department of education have started a resource platform and an information sheet for parents at

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/information-for-parents-and-carers/learning-from-home>

Preschool will continue to advocate for a support mechanism to assist teachers to work with families that are educating their child at home. More information about such measures will be available as we move into term 2.

Preschool is waiting on further guidelines from the Early Childhood Education Directorate, NSW Department of Education and as new information and guidelines come to hand, we will keep you updated.

Please take care and stay safe.

Kind regards

Jenny Du Frocq
Director